

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

page 1 of 6

2018 AUG 30 PM 2:01

S.D. OF N.Y.

Joyce Collier, Sarah-David Rosenbaum and

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

Patricia J. Campolo Plaintiff et al

18CV7992

-Against-

Defendants: New York State Attorney General Office, Plumbers Local Union # 1,

Organized Crime Task force, IPSG, Kroll and Independent

Hearing Officer

See Rider page two

PARTIES TO THIS VERIFIED COMPLAINT

Plaintiffs are Citizens of the United States of America and the State of New York,

residing in the Counties of Queens, Manhattan, and Staten Island

Defendants are Plumbers' Local #1, Organized Crime Task force, State Attorney

General's Office, IPSG and the Independent Hearing Officer.

JURISDICTION

This Court has jurisdiction over this action arising out of 28 USC 1331, 29 USC section

50, 42 USC 1983, 5th & 14TH AMENDMENT, The False Claim Act, New York Labor

Law section 811, 12 NYCRR 600.1, New York Executive law section 63, and Title VII

2000(e) discrimination in employment et al.

VENUE

Venue is proper pursuant to 28 USC 1391(b) a judicial district in which a substantial

part of the events or omissions giving rise to the claim occurred, or a substantial part of

property that is the subject of the action is situated, or (3) a judicial district in which any

Additional Plaintiff

Sarah-David Rosenbaum

Patricia J. Campolo Plaintiff et al

Additional Defendants

Plumbers / Local Union #1

Organized Crime Task Force

IPSG Kroll

Independent Hearing Officer

defendant may be found, if there is no district in which the action may otherwise be brought.

We the Plaintiffs' Joyce Collier, Sarah-David Rosenbaum and Patricia J. Campolo Living persons, allege as follows:

AFFIDAVIT OF FACTS

1. This suit is arising out of a Civil Right Violation of a labor agreement, and by Sexual Harassment, Discrimination based upon gender, and Breach of Enforcement of the Union contractual obligations to establish a fair referral hiring system of which the attorney general was signatory to. The Attorney General's duty pursuant to Executive law section 63 was to protect this public trust interest of the People of the State and its Citizens' private rights that were involved Also, at issue is laundering of money by the Union, and fraud.
2. We the member plaintiffs Joyce Collier, Sarah-David Rosenbaum and Patricia J. Campolo also include allegations of the refusal of the Attorney General's Office to enforce plaintiffs rights concerning plaintiffs' sexual harassment claims, and the implementation of a fair hiring referral system making women inclusive in hiring under the collective bargaining agreement. Plaintiffs also include fraud and misrepresentation committed by IPSIG, KROLL and the I.H.O. in their alleged report thereby obstructing justice and the implementation of the collective bargaining agreement and thereby violated the plaintiffs' rights.
3. The State Courts in-validity of Executive law, section 63 concerning the duty of the AG creates a question of live controversy that denies and injured the plaintiffs'

rights by substituting it with Section 70 and thereby abridged the legislative provisions that enforces the Attorney General's authority under Executive Law section 63 et al of which this Court is called to sit in judgment for the enforcement of those and other federal rights involving that specific collective bargaining agreement. Throughout Plaintiff's Joyce Collier's time as an apprentice and then journeyman employee of Plumbers Local #1 Plaintiff was sexually harassed by the union member male employees, because the men believe the women are inferior and not equal. Plaintiff Patricia J. Campolo shared the same locker room fate to change clothing with the men and repeatedly told the men to inform her when they intended to change from/to work clothes. However, they took it as a joke and pulled their pants down on numerous occasions to harass and humiliate the plaintiff because she was of a different gender. Attached and incorporated by reference are Exhibits A&B of SDR and PC.

(Page 3 of 6)

4. Joyce Collier, Sarah-David Rosenbaum and Patricia J. Campolo join in the spirit of the # Me TOO Movement. In this traditionally male occupation we were continuously harassed as the men placed on the walls sexually explicit pictures of woman and refused to remove them even though they were aware we were offended. Joyce was the only woman of color most of the times on the job as a plumber in most shops. Specifically: the other women including# ME TOO into this complaint were deprived of a right secured by the Federal Constitution and Statute of the State in a similar way while being employed in other union companies also facing similar treatment and unfair hiring because of our gender. This continues under the Continuous Violation Doctrine .

5. While we were experiencing these unfair treatments by Plumbers' Local #1 men, the Union Officers were being investigated for corruption and fraud. In the interim an officer was convicted of charges, arrested for corruption, and as a result the Attorney General became a watch dog to insure that the Union would be fair and inclusive for women. An AGREEMENT was signed as the new code and policy to make woman inclusive in the Referral system for Employment . However, the AG Office breached its duty: it was not to supply legal writing denying corruption or fraud: The reason for this CODE in the provisions was to ensure it was being enforced. We Joyce Collier, Sarah-David Rosenbaum and Patricia J. Campolo bring these charges of violations.

(page 4 of 6)

6. The Attorney General's Duty was given legislative provision and enforcement under section 63. Section 70 was only meant to extend enforcement of the OCTF legislation but Section 70 does not create the Duty of the Attorney General's Office: Section 63 does. These Duties were first written into the statute books in 1951 while the Organized Crime Task Force was implemented in 1970. Nevertheless, the subsequent law of 1951 in Article 63 is the Authority relied upon for the enforcement and duty that was breached. And more importantly the rights secured by the federal constitution pursuant to 42USC 1983 underlying that statute was breached and was committed by parties under the color of state law and color of authority.
7. Strict scrutiny of the Legislative terms and construction in the plain language of the statute is essential for the administration of Justice and its decision cannot be against its validity of the Statute: Executive law section 63. The

AG's Civil Rights Department was specifically made apprised of the unfair treatment against women when other women made a claim before concerning the corruption of its Officers. (page 5 of 6)

8. It should be noted that New York Consolidated Laws Statute book section 273 concerning rules of statutory construction of a penal law inflicts a penalty for its violations or imposes penalties upon offenses committed. The purpose of the statute must be vindication of public justice and not reparation to one aggrieved. The test of the penal character of a statute is whether it appears, to the tribunal which is called upon to enforce it , to be in essential character and effect a punishment of an offense against the public , and imposed as punishment for a wrong or whether it is a grant of civil right to a private person.
9. In hindsight, the terms of construction in the AGREEMENT states;
WHEREAS the principal purpose of this agreement is to uncover and deter corruption of or criminal influence over Plumbers' Local# 1 of any kind whatsoever while preserving Local # 1's integrity and continued effectiveness as a representative of its [Membership] reflect that the Attorney General's Office did have a duty, and that duty was enforceable through Article 63. Section 12 of that Executive Law. That duty established probable cause existed for the AG's Office to decide to investigate Plumbers' Local Union #1 for illegal activities: Deception Fraud or Corruption. And the Terms of Construction of the statute established in Section 273 amplified those rights. Moreover, the legislative provisions of Article 63 Section 12 of the Executive law of the State of New York in conjunction with Section 273 of the Statute

Book specifically lays out those rights to be protected and enforceable by Statute and pursuant to the 14th and 5th amendment of the Federal Constitution.

Page 6 of 6

10. Being signatory to the AGREEMENT the Statute pursuant to Section 273 from the inaction of the Attorney General's Office it is clear that office neglected its duty to correct a public wrong by The Union's unfair dealings and deceptive and fraudulent practices in its business practices. No legal decision from any valid investigation by the AG's Office was ever established as proof the Union had committed no wrongs. The AG's Office failed the female membership of the Union in neglecting its duty and economically allowed the plaintiffs to be deprived of rights as specified in the agreement, defrauded us of our benefits, equal protection, and representation under the law.

WHEREFORE, we; Joyce Collier, Sarah-David Rosenbaum and Patricia J. Campolo demand judgment for injuries and violations in the amount determined by a jury of our peers or a substantial settlement in U.S. Dollars for each individual included in this claim for our suffering, humiliation, economic deprivation, and sexual harassment by Plumbers Local #1 et al and the acquiescence of the Attorney General's Office.

Joyce Collier
Ellen J Gallopin 2878 Grand Ave Apt 30A
Baldwin NY 11510

ELLEN J GALLOPIN
Notary Public - State of New York
NO. 01GA6149013
Qualified in Nassau County 2022
My Commission Expires Jul 3, 2018

Book specifically lays out those rights to be protected and enforceable by Statute and pursuant to the 14th and 5th amendment of the Federal Constitution.

Page 6 of 6

10. Being signatory to the AGREEMENT the Statute pursuant to Section 273 from the inaction of the Attorney General's Office it is clear that office neglected its duty to correct a public wrong by The Union's unfair dealings and deceptive and fraudulent practices in its business practices. No legal decision from any valid investigation by the AG's Office was ever established as proof the Union had committed no wrongs. The AG's Office failed the female membership of the Union in neglecting its duty and economically allowed the plaintiffs to be deprived of rights as specified in the agreement, defrauded us of our benefits, equal protection, and representation under the law. *hostile work environment too!*

WHEREFORE, we; Joyce Collier, Sarah-David Rosenbaum and Patricia J. Campolo demand judgment for injuries and violations in the amount determined by a jury of our peers or a substantial settlement in U.S. Dollars for each individual included in this claim for our suffering, humiliation, economic deprivation, and sexual harassment by Plumbers Local #1 et al and the acquiescence of the Attorney General's Office.

*Sarah-David Rosenbaum
429 E. 62 ST #D3
NYC 10009*

Sarah-David Rosenbaum

Joyce M. Joyce
LAWRENCE J. DELORENZO
NOTARY PUBLIC, STATE OF NEW YORK
No. 01DE6111727
Qualified in Westchester County
My commission expires 06/21/2020

Women Not Wanted

Female construction workers face chronic unemployment and daunting odds. A new mayoral commission will have to change the face of an industry.

By Dan Bell



Joyce Collier is qualified as a plumber but can only find work cleaning up job sites.

JOYCE COLLIER LIKES to stand back from a day's work and see an empty space filled with something solid. She feels pride that it was her hands and her skill that put it there. But for the past five years, instead of plying her trade as a plumber, she's been left to tend the fire and clean the kitchen.

Literally. This winter, Collier spent her workdays watching over space heaters, checking fire exits and cleaning up after tradesmen on their work sites. But it was better than having no job at all. Even though she qualified as a certified plumber from a five-year union apprenticeship in 1999, for the past half-decade she has rarely worked more than four months of each year.

The last time Collier checked, of the 21 women in her union, Plumber's Union Local 1, only six were employed using their trades.

(Another six are in apprenticeships.) Women make up less than 1 percent of the 5,700 members in her union, and they have an unemployment rate of 60 percent. According to a business agent with Plumber's Local 1, the union's unemployment rate as a whole is about 3.5 percent.

Chronic unemployment has led many women to leave the trades altogether. Collier has compiled records showing that from 1989 to 2004 the number of women in her union fell from 36 to 21, as they "lost their books" when they fell behind on union dues. They couldn't afford their dues because they weren't getting work.

Carlyne Montgomery was one of them. After she qualified in 1995 following her apprenticeship, Montgomery would call her union delegate every day to look for work. She

says she found herself continually passed over for jobs. "You have to know somebody to work," she explains.

It's not just the plumbers. Collier is a member of Sisters in the Trades, a group of more than 200 tradeswomen who are beginning to organize for equal treatment. In addition to plumbers, the group represents laborers, carpenters, sheetmetal workers, painters and teamsters.

"It is definitely at least three or four times harder to be a woman in this industry than it is to be black," says Lavon Chambers, a field representative with the Greater New York Laborers-Employers Cooperation and Education Trust. "What would be easier, to tell all of your 30 or 40 guys not to sexually harass, or not to hire a woman?"

In his State of the City speech in January, Mayor Bloomberg announced a new Commission on Construction Opportunity to tackle discrimination in the building trades. With the city on the brink of billions of dollars in new construction, Bloomberg pledged to rally developers, contractors, union representatives and politicians to help ensure that women and people of color have access to the estimated 230,000 new jobs that will come with the redevelopment of Manhattan's West Side and other neighborhoods.

The trouble is, discrimination is so entrenched that it's hard to know where to start. Everyone agrees that as more women come into the industry it will change. But it's a catch-22: More tradeswomen will dilute the sexism, but sexism is preventing women from getting a foothold.

There is a "revolving door," says Francoise Jacobsohn, a project manager for Legal Momentum's Women Rebuild project. "As fast as they come in, they leave again." The atmosphere on site is often so hostile, she says, that women who do get employed often leave quickly afterwards.

Continual verbal abuse was only the start of it for Collier. She describes instances where

workers groped her and undressed in front of her. She has often been forced to share the same rest huts where the men change their clothes before and after work. When Collier asked the men to warn her so she could leave before they undressed, they ignored the request.

"Do me a favor: If you're going to change into your street clothes, give me the same respect that you'd want all these men to give your mother, sister or daughter," she told them. "And one guy just went right ahead and dropped his pants." This treatment, she says, went on for two months on one site. "I've left plenty of jobs crying, and told the foreman I was sick because of what was happening," says Collier.

The trade group representing employers doesn't dispute that there are few women in the construction business. "I have not ever heard that contractors discriminate on the basis of sex," said Francis X. McArdle, managing director of the General Contractors Association of New York. "I think the biggest question is the extent to which [women] apply into apprenticeship programs and are accepted."

Applicants' qualifications are an issue, agrees Anne Rascon, executive director of Nontraditional Employment for Women (NEW), which does preapprenticeship training. She gets more applicants for those programs than there are spaces, but many of them are prevented from enrolling because they lack high school diplomas. "Not having a GED is paramount," says Rascon. "There are a lot of women who don't have ninth grade reading or math skills." The same is often true for men, but with so few women in the trades, every obstacle has a disproportionate impact.

Women continue to show massive interest in apprenticeships, the first step toward construction careers. Last March, in an event tied to the reconstruction of the World Trade Center site, more than 700 women bottlenecked the stairs of Pace University to learn about careers in construction and watch half a dozen female plumbers, electricians and carpenters plying their skills on trade-show mock-ups.

FEDERAL LAW is supposed to offer some assurances for female construction workers. A 1978 executive order requires contractors and subcontractors on projects receiving federal funds to make "best faith efforts" to ensure 6.9 percent of hours are worked by women. The Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) is charged with enforcement.

Last year, OFCCP did not carry out a single compliance evaluation of any construction con-

LEGAL ASSOCIATION FOR NONPROFITS & COMMUNITY GROUPS

NYLPI

New York Lawyers For The Public Interest 151 W 30 St, New York, NY 10001 212-244-4664

CORNELL in NEW YORK CITY

Master of Professional Studies in Industrial and Labor Relations

A unique opportunity for working adults in the NYC area

Pursue a Master's degree, without interrupting your career

Explore today's workplace issues with distinguished Cornell faculty

Weekend classes for serious professionals

- Collective Bargaining
- Human Resource Management
- Labor Economics
- Organizational Behavior
- Law & Public Policy
- Research

212.340.2886

mpsnycc@cornell.edu

www.ilr.cornell.edu/mpsnyc

Do You Need a Lawyer Who Understands Groups Serving the Elderly?

Many older New Yorkers struggle to prepare healthy meals, find affordable housing and identify supportive services that will enable them to remain at home as they age. Nonprofit organizations throughout New York City form a vital safety net delivering services specifically designed for the elderly.

If your organization works with the elderly, you should know about Lawyers Alliance for New York. Our staff and volunteer attorneys understand the legal issues that affect your work. We can help with corporate governance and accountability, contracts, employment and volunteer issues, real estate and other business law matters, so you can focus on delivering services.

To learn more, call us at 212 219-1800, ext. 239.

330 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10001
212 219-1800

www.lany.org

**Lawyers Alliance
for New York**

Building a Better New York



tractor in New York. Over the past five years, it carried out 134 in New York City. But no local case has been brought to litigation in the past 10 years, according to an OFCCP source.

And although OFCCP performs random audits and responds to complaints, it does not track the number of women unless a contractor has been selected for audit. Neither does the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission, the City Commission on Human Rights or the Department of Labor.

Following a month of phone calls from *City Limits*, the State Department of Transportation, a major recipient of federal funds, was unable to say how many women were working on any of four current highway projects—9A on the West Side, the Bruckner Expressway, the FDR Drive or the Staten Island Expressway. “I personally have never been asked in three years to put these

**“What would be
easier, to tell all of
your 30 or 40 guys
not to sexually
harass, or not to
hire a woman?”**

numbers together,” says agency spokeswoman Lisa Kuhner.

For contractors that receive money solely from city or state agencies, there is even less oversight. Between 2002 and 2004, Collier unsuccessfully “shaped” (applied for work on site, rather than through her union) the \$2 billion upgrade of the Newtown Creek Water Pollution Control Plant in Brooklyn six times. She says that on only one occasion did she see another woman on site. According to a construction manager at Newtown Creek, there are currently around 800 workers, of whom about 20 are women.

A DEP spokesman said that the agency has no hiring goals, and averred that the project does not receive any federal funding.

So what are unions doing about it? Not a lot,

*Your Neighborhood Housing
Insurance Specialist for over 25 Years*
**INSURING LOW-INCOME CO-OPS,
NOT-FOR-PROFIT COMMUNITY GROUPS
AND TENANTS**

Bollinger
Insurance Since 1876

Contact:

Ingrid Kaminski, Senior Vice President
212-530-7507

Fax: 212-269-8112

Ingrid@BollingerInsurance.com

Bollinger, Inc. — NEW YORK DIVISION
100 Wall Street, 22nd Floor, New York, NY 10268-0982

www.BollingerInsurance.com/ny

say advocates. Collier has even brought an anti-discrimination case against Plumbers Local 1. Her complaint alleges that the union's referral process, in which it acts as a mediator between workers and contractors, is biased and does not put women forward for jobs as often as men.

Collier brought her case to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the National Labor Relations Board and the New York State Attorney General. Both the EEOC and the NLRB ruled in favor of her union.

In a letter explaining its ruling, the NLRB said, "A union operating a non-exclusive referral service like the one here owes no duty of fair representation in connection with its operation.... Accordingly, even assuming that the union did discriminate against you and others in the referral process, it owed no duty of fair representation." In other words, because the union is not the only means by which its members find work, if it chooses to discriminate, it is not a violation of the National Labor Relations Act.

"They lost. They have no case," says Dudley Kinsley, a business agent with Local 1. Though the union has an equal opportunity policy,

Kinsley declined to provide information on it.

Labor insiders say the real obstacle presented by the unions is one of neglect and intransigence, rather than active obstruction. The unions "could tell the contractors that we're not going to tolerate this, but they don't," says Jane LaTour, author of *Sisters in the Brotherhood*, a book about women in New York's construction industry. Tradesmen often see hazing and tough humor as part and parcel of working in the trades; as apprentices, many had rough treatment themselves.

Some unions, including those representing carpenters, laborers and the sheet-metal workers, are starting to try to better accommodate women. Each has a women's committee that works to organize female construction workers and provide them with support services. The committees provide mentors, announce job prospects, and host guest speakers on everything from coping with sexual harassment to credit card debt. Unions also provide social workers to help women and minorities gain access to child care and other support services. "We believe that women need to get organized, to get involved in the union," says Elly Spicer

of the New York and Vicinity Carpenters Labor Management Corporation. Just over 1 percent of the carpenters are women. "We are at the beginning of the process, not the end," she adds. "We have a long way to go."

It remains to be seen how much help they'll get from the Bloomberg administration. The 34-member Commission on Construction Opportunity, which includes seven city agency heads, had its first meeting in March and has yet to discuss any specific measures. Advocates say a crucial first step would be to start tracking the number of women hired.

Right now, Collier hasn't been hired anywhere—she was laid off from her heater duty job in March. After 11 years as a plumber, she has accrued six years worth of pension contributions. If she gets injured now, she says, she will have \$400 a month to live on. She has no health coverage. "I'm struggling just to keep my head above water, and I can name a lot who are going through the same thing," she says.

Why doesn't she give it up?

"Because I have invested so much time in it and because I like plumbing," she says. "I like working with my hands." •



New School University
Robert J. Milano Graduate School
of Management and Urban Policy

Milano

CHANGE.

Program Concentrations in:

- Strategic Health Management
- International Policy & Program Management
- Community Development & Nonprofit Management
- Housing & Community Development
- Finance & Economic Development
- Workforce Development
- Social Policy

Courses Available

- Degree and Non-Degree •
- Day and Evening •
- Saturday •
- On-Line •

Site-line (1/2 on-line and 1/2 in-class) •

Earn a Master of Science degree in:

- Nonprofit Management
- Health Services Management and Policy
- Human Resources Management
- Organizational Change Management
- Urban Policy Analysis and Management

Ph.D. degree:

- Public and Urban Policy

**Applications still being accepted
for Fall admission**

OPEN HOUSE
Wednesday, June 22
6:00 p.m.

An affirmative action/equal opportunity institution

to RSVP or for more information, call 212-229-5400 ext. 1120 or email milanoadmissions@newschool.edu

72 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10011

www.newschool.edu/milano

ing the work force from 1983 to 2003.)

"Women face barriers entering the field and more hurdles after they're in the field," McCormick said. "A woman has to be very determined."

Some of the drawbacks include men who still don't think women belong on construction sites, sexual harassment and the temporary nature of the work. Jobs may last three weeks or three months, rarely more than a year. For Joyce Collier, a plumber from Inwood, it was back to the unemployment line in March once the permanent heat came on in the 32-story luxury apartment building on Manhattan's East Side where she had been tending the temporary propane heaters. As a journeywoman, Collier, 49, earns union scale, \$41.50 an hour. But, she said, "I'm constantly fighting for a job."

Once hired, some women say they have difficulty proving they're as skilled as the next guy. On a recent Manhattan hotel project, Collier says, "they had me carrying toilet bowls up five flights. I went home and took my own toilet apart and put it together again to prove to myself that I could do it." Collier filed suit with the Human Rights Commission in New York City, alleging discrimination because she said she was given work well below her skill levels. She lost, she said, because "the other girls were afraid to speak up."

But Collier's experiences are shared by Jonnie Mae McAllister of Jamaica, a steamfitter who's been working for more than five months on a Harlem sewer plant. After years in construction, McAllister, 41, says she's learned to deal with harassment: "You just focus on the work and don't let it bother you."

Most women enter the construction trades after previous experience in other fields, said Patricia Jones, director of the Manhattan-based Nontraditional Employment for Women, or NEW, which for 25 years has provided pre-apprentice construction training. Women coming out of the military also make successful candidates, she said.

Though the program does some recruiting at technical high schools, "we get few 19-year-old applicants. Women have not made the same strides in the skilled trades as they have in fields such as law and medicine," Jones said. "Families still don't think of their daughters as plumbers, electricians, iron workers, carpenters."

More than 90 percent of female applicants for electrician training are career changers, mostly in their late 20s or early 30s, according to Donald Fiore, apprenticeship and training director with the Electrical Industry of Nassau and Suffolk. About 15 percent of his applicants are women. Once she's made it into the five-year training program based largely on aptitude tests, "we rarely get a dropout," he says. But it takes a gutsy, hard-working woman, Fiore adds.

Janet Jennaco of Commack was a fragrance specialist in department stores for 15 years while she raised her four sons. Now 50 and an apprentice laborer for six months, she works at Millenium Hills, a private-public affordable home development site in Melville, where she cleans up construction debris. "It sounds crazy but I love it. I go to work smiling," she said, "and I don't have to worry about making sales goals."

For some, such as Jennaco, it's opened a new world of outdoor labor and work force camaraderie. For others like Collier, it's an employment battleground. Most agree, however, that for salary and benefits, it beats the traditional women's fields by far.

Ward, a graduate of the University of Minnesota, established her own business last year. After she graduated from the Plumbers Local Union appren-



Newsday Photo / Viorel Florescu

Joyce Collier of Inwood is a journeywoman plumber who makes \$41.50 an hour. At this construction job, she tends to propane heaters.

tice program in 1990, her wage rate doubled to \$26.91 and jobs in New York became scarcer, she said. She spent five years as a "traveler," fielding industrial jobs around the country.

Jack Kennedy, president and secretary-treasurer of the Building and Construction Trades Council of Nassau and Suffolk, says school guidance counselors are to blame for steering young people into college programs when some might benefit more from blue-collar apprenticeships. The schools "don't know what the apprentice program is all about," he said.

Male bias is no longer a problem, Kennedy said. "Women are now accepted in the workplace."

While the outlook for such jobs is strong longer-term, right now the economic slump hasn't helped.

"We're hurting," Kennedy said, "We need to build some big projects that are labor intensive."

Some area women are guided into union apprenticeships through a federal-state program called Built on Pride, designed to move welfare recipients and the working poor into the skilled trades. The construction trades council, with a \$2-million grant from the state Department of Labor, focuses on helping unemployed or underemployed people make the transition, said Built on Pride director Angela DeVito. Guidelines require that the candidate be the parent of a minor child and have a total family income not exceeding, for example, \$30,040 for a family of three.

During the past two years, the program has moved 22 women into union apprenticeships, including the carpenters, electricians, laborers and heavy equipment operators training programs.

In New York City, Built on Pride funding is focused on youth and has encouraged nearly 250 high school seniors to get into union apprenticeships in the past two years, said Paul Fernandes, chief of staff of the Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York.

"We doubled the number of minorities in the apprenticeships to almost 50 percent in the last 20 years, but not nearly the same increase in women," Fernandes said. "I doubt if we're ever going to have 40-50 percent women," he said, "but we're not going to be stuck at 5 percent forever."

DeVito, who also works with the Suffolk Department of Labor, says the problem is often in the mindset of the women.

"They think they can't do it," she tells the women that "all construction work is physically demanding and you have to be prepared for many different environments." Self-assessment is the first step. "Stand in front of the mirror and ask yourself, can I do this? Do I want to do this?"

DeVito brings the same message to high schools, vocational schools and even middle schools. Most students are not aware that they can earn college credits while working at paid apprentice jobs and taking classroom studies at night.

The Nassau-Suffolk trades council plans to start pre-apprentice training in Amityville next month for people who may need advance help in understanding tools, math and job readiness. The city building trades council plans to work with NEW on pre-apprentice training, Fernandes said.

General Building Laborers Local 66 in Melville, which began an apprentice

program less than two years ago, took in five women among 25 apprentices this year. Since laborers assist all the building trades, they have to learn a variety of skills, said Sean Brennan, apprenticeship coordinator and training director. He doesn't doubt that women can do the jobs. "We teach techniques that reduce the necessity for physical strength," he said.

Jennaco, a 5-foot-2, 120-pound body builder, is one of his most enthusiastic trainees, faithfully attending classes at night and Saturdays. The only woman on her job site, she gets no special dispensations except she's allowed to use the bathroom in the trailer instead of the portables. As a first-year apprentice, she earns \$14.79 an hour. Her salary will go up to \$17.25 after 1,000 hours on the job and to at least \$25 after 4,000 hours. Her ambition: to be a job supervisor.

Cheryl Smyler-George of Rockville Centre, who ran a prep program for women and minorities funded by the federal labor department in the 1980s, said she did much of her recruiting in Laundromats. "I figured anyone who could hoist those baskets of wash could work in construction," she said. "But women use their brains rather than brawn," said Smyler-George, now an adviser with Hofstra University's School of Labor Studies.

"Women would come to me with all their problems, paying the mortgage, child care, family problems. I tell them to make the money and everything else will fall into place."

Electrician Kimberly Pirrone, 35, might agree. She left her bartending job to become an apprentice. These days, Pirrone, a single mother with two teenage daughters, said her \$42 an hour, plus fully paid health insurance and other union benefits, enabled her to buy a house in Kings Park. Employed since April on a Melville hotel renovation, she said, "I'm home by 4, in time to watch my daughters' lacrosse games."

Getting Started

Women who want to apply for construction trade apprenticeships can call the individual unions or get advice and direction from the following organizations:

- Women on the Job, 516-883-1691; www.liwomen.com
- Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York; www.constructionskills.org
- Nontraditional Employment for Women (NEW), 212-627-6252; www.new-nyc.org
- Building and Construction Trades Council of Nassau and Suffolk, Built on Pride, Angela DeVito, 631-853-6583.

Do women belong in construction jobs? Talk about it at www.newsday.com/business.